

L'UMILE PIANTA.

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Year 1904—

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Years 1907-8—

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Years 1909-10—

MISS V. R. BISHOP, Sunnyhill, Wimbledon.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

- 1910. Bellerby (*née* C. E. Edwards), 11, Northanger Road,
Streatham, S.E.
- 1908. Clendinnen, G., at Marsh House, Bentley, Farnham
(post).
- 1909. Stevens, E., at Coombe End, Danes Hill, Woking
(post).

NOTICES.

The Editor wishes to remind students that all changes of address should be sent in to her and to Miss Gray directly the change takes place. The Editor knows of four students who have changed posts and given no notice of it; she has had letters returned "Not known." Such carelessness on the part of students puts their Hon. Secretary and their Hon.

Editor to unnecessary expense and trouble, and it is so very easy to give notice by postcard of any change.

A Students' meeting was held at 13, Chilworth Street, on July 6th, 1912, but in spite of the brilliant sunshine, only three students attended the meeting—Misses Kitching, Davis, and Gray. It was disappointing that the numbers were so few, and we should warmly welcome suggestions for making the meetings more attractive. They are held regularly on the first Saturday of every month of the year with the exception of August and September, and, unless otherwise stated, are held at 13, Chilworth Street, at 3.30. It would be so nice to welcome fresh comers—and there are really quite a large number of students within very easy reach of town, if not actually in it. Won't those students make a special effort to be present at at least one of next term's meetings, which will be held on October 5th, November 2nd, and December 7th? The July meeting proved a very lively one, notwithstanding the smallness of the "gathering," and we became quite excited over the Insurance Bill and other matters that came up for discussion; so much so that the meeting was prolonged until the unprecedently late hour of 6 p.m. Do come and swell our numbers and participate in the good things provided, both for mind and body!

The next number of L'UMILE PIANTA will appear on November 15th. All communications must reach the Editor by October 25th (address at The Hurst, Headley, Epsom).

BIRTHS.

HUGHES-JONES.—On July 14th, at Pond Hill Cottage, Cheam, the wife of Picton Hughes-Jones, of a daughter.

ROTHERA.—On June 4th, to Mr. and Mrs. Lambert Rothera, Ash Mount, Cross Road, Bushey, a son, David Lambert.

MARRIAGE.

BELLERBY-EDWARDS.—At Jesmond Church, on June 12th, by the Rev. J. T. Inskip, M.A., Norman, elder son of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Bellerby, to Constance Evelyn, fourth daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Edwards.

ANNUAL MEETING.

Held by kind invitation of Mrs. Franklin at 50, Porchester Terrace, July 17th, 1912.

Only a very few students accepted Mrs. Franklin's kind invitation for the afternoon of the 17th, and it was disappointing not to find a large gathering. But we had a delightful time. We sat in the garden and talked of many things, and enjoyed looking at the Winchester photographs, and we lived through many of those happy hours over again; many of the "Press" photographs improved almost beyond recognition when seen as real photographs instead of as very indifferent newspaper illustrations. It was delightful, too, to glean a little Scale How news first hand from some of the present students, for holidays had begun and five were there; and it was particularly nice to meet Miss J. H. Smith and to have the opportunity of wishing her God-speed in the new sphere of work upon which she enters in the autumn when she sets sail for Madras.

After tea Mrs. Franklin spoke to us for a short time. She did not choose any particular subject, but touched on many things that she thought would help us and that would be of interest just at that time. To begin with, she urged upon us all the importance of getting knowledge. One of the dangers of the present day is that people will not take the trouble to read and form their own opinions, but glean a few stray ideas from the conversation of others and give

ANNUAL MEETING

them forth as their own, with the declaration: "Oh, everybody says or thinks . . ." In this connection Mrs. Franklin strongly advised us to read Miss Mason's articles on "Knowledge as the Basis of Education" that have recently appeared in the "Times Educational Supplement." She also advocated the reading of both sides of all party questions, so that we should know more surely what we were talking about. We were warned against rushing blindly after new and largely advertised methods, such as the Montessori method, in which the writer advocates the education of children without any use of books, quite overlooking the fact that what might have been successful in the case of abnormal children should not on any account be applied to the average child with a healthy appetite for acquiring knowledge through the medium of books. (Miss Montessori's book is reviewed in the August "P.R.") Mrs. Franklin also begged us, as students, to do all we could to enlarge the circulation of the *Parents' Review* and to encourage local booksellers to stock it. Copies can always be had from the office on sale or return. The magazine is not "boomed" by advertising, and it is only in ways like this that it can become more widely known. As we know, the education of the children in the P.U.S. is carried on almost entirely by putting good literature direct into the hands of the scholars, and so they learn early in life to love books for their own sake and to know how to use them, a habit which will prove invaluable to them as they grow older, and the companionship of books will give them a wide outlook on life in general. One had only to be present at the Winchester gathering, and to be surrounded by all the happy faces there, to realise the healthy atmosphere that books bring into the lives of the children.

We all felt very much indebted to Mrs. Franklin for her very practical and helpful talk, and after a little more general conversation we separated, feeling that holidays were almost upon us.

The following ex-students were present : Misses Kitching, Faunce, Evans, Mrs. Dudley Smith, Misses Fountain, Gray, Davis, Young, Hart, Chaplin, and J. H. Smith, and about five present students, amongst whom were Misses Maud, Malden, and Feiling.

THE STUDENTS' CONFERENCE.

It has been decided, in accordance with a suggestion from Miss Mason, to postpone the Students' Conference for a year, so that it will take place in 1914, not in 1913. This will naturally cause much disappointment, but, thanks to the Winchester gathering, many of us feel almost as if we have had one of our Conferences this year. Sixty-eight of us were there. Also, what with fancy dress and in many cases board and lodging to be paid for, it must have been an expense to many of us. We all want to arrange something special to celebrate our "Coming of Age" in a manner worthy of the occasion, so the Committee think it will be just as well to have a longer time in which to think things over and to plan a suitable programme; so will students still try to evolve some scheme that will lift the 1914 Conference on to a higher plane of usefulness and enjoyment than has ever been reached before?

REMBRANDT.

Those of us who are teaching in or near town are glad to see that three of the pictures set for this term are in London, while there is also a copy of the "Night-Round" in the National Gallery.

The number of excellent books on Rembrandt is legion, but of them I should like to mention the one in the "Little Books on Art" series, price 2s. 6d.

Rembrandt's portrait of himself in the National Gallery, painted at the age of 34, in 1640, is remarkable for the way

in which the dark cloak and cap stand out against a still darker background. The shadows in the folds over the right arm are thrown up by the light on the hand, the sheen on the rich dark-brown velvet is accentuated by the fur edging, relieved in its turn by the closely-pleated chemisette and the embroidered coat collar in which a lovely shade of red predominates. Round the cap on the wavy hair is a gold chain fastened at intervals by a brooch with a large stone inset. The brows are slightly knit, the eyes are thoughtful, and the whole expression in striking contrast with his portrait with Saskia on his knee. It is interesting to think how Van Eyck would have worked out in minute detail the embroidery on collar and undervest.

The "Night-Round" was painted in 1642, and I can only describe it from the copy which I am told does not do the original anything like justice.

The captain in the centre is in black velvet with a red sash, his lieutenant in buff with Rembrandt's favourite steel gorget, the soldier loading the gun on the left is in red, and the little girl, who seems so out of place among these men, is in pale cream-white. The background is very dark, and the standard of blue and orange is very cleverly arranged to throw up the less prominent figures.

One critic says of this picture that there is apparently no sun or moon from which the light in it could come : it is pure fancy. Nevertheless, it is the balance of light and shade that makes up the great beauty of the picture.

"The Pilgrims at Emmaus," painted in 1648, is considered a veritable gem, for in it Rembrandt has tried to depict the reality of the Divine presence. The surroundings are of the simplest, but we can see the dawning recognition in the Apostles' attitude, while the mental absorption of Christ is in distinct contrast to the servant looking on with curious eyes.

The "Syndics of the Cloth Hall," painted in 1661, ranks as the final masterpiece of Rembrandt's life. I cannot describe

the picture, as I have not seen it, but in comparing the print with others of the same type by various artists I was struck by the personality of each individual. Five of the six faces are much of the same shape, and yet how different each is! In this picture the surroundings are quite simple: the Syndics are sitting at a table with their ledger and money-bag, behind them stands a servant, and all have raised their eyes to some unseen intruder.

"The Unmerciful Servant," otherwise known as the "Centurion Cornelius," is a triumph of Rembrandt's mastery over light. The background is once again very dark, and the chief figure at the table is dressed in two shades of wonderful red. The central man of the three holds his hat in his hand, and appears from his brownish leather apron to be a smith; the figure on his right is evidently an older man, while on his left stands a man about whom it is difficult to decide anything. He wears a helmet with three buff plumes and a row of jewelled points, which reflect the light. The way in which the light falls behind the helmet on these plumes and throws up the whole of the man's head and shoulders is wonderful. In all the position of the hands is very characteristic and worthy of notice. I remember Mr. Horsburgh, in some lectures on Giotto, saying that it was possible to construct a whole picture giving exact attitudes, from the position of the hands alone.

"Christ blessing the children" is inscribed on the frame "School of Rembrandt," so there is evidently some doubt as to the artist. In this picture reds and browns predominate again; Christ's garments are red and brown, the apple in the hands of the standing child is bright red, and the sleeve of the child in the shawl is red. There are eleven persons altogether, though the faces of two are only partly visible. The child whom Christ is blessing is rather appealing; the finger in her mouth and the shy, averted face are very natural, though the little figure strikes one as being rather old for a child. Rembrandt was not troubled as to what

children Christ had blessed. He depicts the family life exactly as he himself lived it and as he saw it around him.

"Rembrandt had little of what is called exquisite taste, nor did he differ in that from those around him. What is bad taste in him belongs to others. He seems to have admired it in men of the past, but to have had a perfect wisdom which prevented his gathering what he could not fully use, which he could not test by the life of every day. What is distinct and beautiful is apparently his alone."

M. E. DAVIS.

FROM A LETTER.

HOUSE OF THE EPIPHANY,

BARISAL.

How I wish I could take some of you out in our Mission House boat (called the "Epiphany") to visit the village, far in the Ganges delta, where few Europeans ever go. A land of slow, winding rivers, with scattered, mud-built islands, dotted over with thatch-covered native huts. A land of insects and flying beasts innumerable, of mosquitoes, and white ants and smelling beetles, and yet a most attractive land, for the people, though very ignorant, are simple and unspoilt and most responsive to the least bit of affection—poor things, very little love comes into their lives.

We should have to approach the island in a small, flat-bottomed boat, a kind of cross between a canoe and a punt, and when we landed we should be surrounded by a crowd of women and half-naked children. I should advise you to dress in white, because colours or material with a pattern might cause a sensation which you might find embarrassing, and to tuck your hair well out of sight if you do not wish to be loudly admired. "How old are you?" will probably be the first question. "Are you married? and how many children have you?" "What! Not married! Why not?"

This sounds ill-mannered, but it is only that they are like children, children quite untrained, sometimes very naughty, but always simple and affectionate.

I wonder if you have ever heard of Barisal. It is a town lying in the delta of the Ganges, about 200 miles from Calcutta. Imagine a large grass-grown compound, with a pond in the middle and cocoanut trees growing round. There are very few things in the world more lovely, I think, than cocoanut trees waving in the breeze with the sun shining on their long leaves, or gleaming silver in the glorious Indian moonlight, when the stars are so brilliant that they shine in the water below, and the fireflies dart out and disappear like points of light. Then picture at one end of the compound a large and beautiful church, built in the Italian style, with a basilica and narthex, and empty of seats. All round the walls are pictures from the life of our Lord in soft colours. Perhaps one of the most impressive sights is this church filled night and morning with Christian native children. I have never seen such reverence in a whole congregation. Indians, I suppose, have the sense of reverence very strong. They enter in absolute silence, their bare feet making no sound—not a whisper throughout the service. There is no choir, for all the congregation form the choir, and I should like you to hear them sing, accompanied only by a viola, one of their beautiful Bengali tunes, or a familiar English hymn translated into Bengali: "O come, O come, Emmanuel, and rescue captive"—not Israel, but—"captive India"! Captive India! You understand what that means when you go outside the mission compound. Everywhere there is the stamp of heathenism, an awful look of utter apathy or even of absolute wickedness on the faces, sometimes of quite tiny children. The difference in appearance between the Christian and Hindu children is astonishing: the former are so much more alive and intelligent-looking and full of happiness. Captive India! Yes, indeed, when the life of an Indian woman is often one long tragedy, from the day when, a

mere child, she is carried off sobbing from her father's house to the husband whom she has perhaps never seen and to whom she may not even speak except in the darkness of the night. Then, again, when her child is born, laid out perhaps on the ground without shelter from the drenching rain or pitiless sun, without help, without food, because she is "unclean," and it is pollution to touch her. It is not an uncommon thing, when a girl is born, for the little wife to whisper to the Sister who has come to help her: "They will beat me when you go because it is not a boy." And even worse is the fate of the widow—unloved, avoided, looked on as one who brings ill-luck.

Perhaps you know all this? No, you may have heard, but I do not think one understands till one has seen.

HELEN DYKE.

HANDICRAFTS.

I am writing this paper in the hope of inducing discussion, for surely the PIANTA would be of more practical use if people would discuss papers, especially those on the teaching of various subjects.

The word *handicraft* covers a multitude of "works"—it includes needlework of all kinds, knitting, crochet, netting, tatting, basket-work, cardboard and wood sloyd, carton-work, leather-work, bookbinding, and many other arts, useful or ornamental; but here I propose to mention only two or three, and those chiefly with reference to the teaching of children under 12.

Almost the first thing babies instinctively learn to do when they are a few months old is to use their fingers, and I suppose one of the chief objects of most handicrafts is to train those fingers to further usefulness. If mothers and nurses would encourage the little ones to use their fingers in drawing, sewing, knitting, paper-folding, etc., how much easier

it would be later to teach them to write. In my class I have a twin boy and girl. They came to me just before their sixth birthday, and neither of them could write at all; but the boy—who had been accustomed to drawing, painting, sewing, and carpentering (he had already for some time had lessons with a carpenter) very soon learnt to make the letters from a copy set; and now, after four terms, he writes a very nice round hand. The girl—a very delicate little thing—had always been treated as a baby, and had never used a pencil or paint brush, or even fastened her doll's clothes, with the natural result that she had no control whatever over her fingers, and even now finds great difficulty in forming letters, and in keeping them between lines.

Of course, painting (not “blobs,” but freehand work) helps them more than anything else at first.

I am afraid that what I am going to say now may be considered heresy, but I really think it is a mistake to teach small children any handicraft in which they cannot produce satisfactory results. If they are conscientious and like to do good work, they get discouraged; but if not, they grow careless and contented with bad results.

Take, for instance, basket-work. Cane basket-work requires considerable strength in the fingers for such parts as starting, turning-up, and borders—an average child has not the strength to do it *well* till he is at least 10 years old, often not before 12, and I do not see the use of teaching it to younger children if the teacher has always to do the harder parts, for then the resulting basket is *not* the child's own work.

Raffia-work, on the other hand, is easy, and quite small children (of 5 and 6), if they are carefully taught, can make really nice, neat little baskets, provided that the teacher allows no slovenly work, but insists on it being undone.

It is always a puzzle to me why carton-work is put down for classes Ia and Ib. To do *good* carton-work is far from easy—witness the efforts of students preparing for the Sloyd

examination! Surely children ought to learn accuracy and neatness by doing a certain amount of practical geometry first.

Paper-folding—*i.e.*, making boats, tables, etc.—is far easier and quite suitable for the little ones; but I have always found that even children of 12 or 14 want a great deal of help in carton-work, especially in sticking their models together. I may be wrong, but I have a theory that unless children are naturally clever and neat with their fingers (and we all know some people never are, however much training and practice they have), it is far better only to teach them those handicrafts which do not require very great technical skill, *e.g.*, modelling, basket-work, sewing, knitting; and to teach sloyd, carton-work, leather-work, etc., *only* to those who show a natural aptitude for such work. It is pitiful to see some of the Sloyd models done by children, and exhibited with great pride by fond parents—models with every angle crooked, jagged edges, badly-fitting binding, and covering papers put on crooked. I have seen so much of it, and always think, “What is the use?” Surely that kind of work is not good training for children! But there are many—even grown-up people—who seem utterly incapable of doing exact and accurate work, such as is absolutely essential to producing good results in sloyd.

The simplest bookbinding is far easier—I mean sewing a book together, and then putting on a limp leather or cloth cover, just lined with paper, and using no cardboard at all.

Why is it that so very few girls nowadays do really beautiful sewing? I once stayed in a house where none of the inmates had ever possessed sewing cotton finer than 50, or needles finer than size 8!! They were quite amazed when they were shown some hemming done with number 200 cotton and a number 12 needle! Was it any wonder that neither of the girls could even hem nicely?

I suppose nowadays girls are too busy playing tennis, cricket, or hockey to have time to “sit on a cushion and sew

a fine seam," but it does seem a grievous pity when we think of the exquisite work done by our grandmothers, and still done in some of the convents in France, Ireland, and elsewhere.

Surely, too, *every girl* (and boy, too) ought to knit stockings and socks—they may not be needed for home use, but can always be given away. Personally, I dislike having my hands idle, so always knit when I am reading to the children, and it is surprising how many pairs of even men's socks one can make in a term.

Then, again, why has tatting become almost a lost art? Really fine tatting is such beautiful work, almost as delicate as cobwebs, and it is not difficult, yet I have never met anyone (as far as I know) who can do it, except my mother and one of my sisters! I am ashamed to say that I have never learned.

For older children with good eyesight, pillow-lace is delightful, and does not require such neat, clever fingers as many handicrafts. I know many people think it strains the eyes, but if only done for a short time each day I do not think any harm would result. It is a well-known fact that in Bedfordshire, before the days of Board Schools, children were sent to "lace schools" (where, by the way, the parents paid 2d. a week for each child for lessons in *manners!*) at the age of 3 or 4, where they worked for three hours a day at first, then longer, till at the age of 12 or 14 they were working at least six hours a day, and, of course, those who afterwards earned their living by lace-making were obliged to work *all* day to earn even seven or eight shillings a week; and yet you will find old ladies of 80 or more still working hard, in many cases even without spectacles.

I am afraid this paper is very long, but I have written it, as I said, in the hope that it will start a discussion.

E. R. TETLEY.

SOME EXPERIENCES IN GERMANY.

A few facts about ordinary life in Germany may interest you, and I have tried to write down a few of the experiences I had there, and to describe some of the manners and customs of the country which struck me as strange and different from our own.

There is much talk at present in the newspapers and elsewhere of the unfriendliness, not to say hostility, of Germany to Great Britain. We cannot discuss that question here, so I will tell you only of the great kindness which I met with in Germany and try to give some idea of the genuine goodness of the Germans when you know them personally. I met no one who was not cordial and friendly even when discussing politics—indeed, kind-heartedness is a leading characteristic of the German people to my mind—a sort of simple friendliness which one does not find just at first in other nations.

One of the things which struck me at once was what is often called the lack of freedom for the individual. In Germany there is conscription, and perhaps the military training which is so apparent everywhere has something to do with the strict rules and regulations about what seem to us mere trifles in every-day life, but which are punishable by fines and even imprisonment in Germany. For instance, in Dresden, where I lived, you may only play the piano or other instrument between certain hours; you may never walk on the grass in public parks; you must notify the police if any foreigner stays with you more than three months; you may not water your window boxes outside in case water falls on passers-by, etc., etc. The police are an all-powerful body, and enforce these laws with the utmost severity. Now, this may sound disagreeable to us who are accustomed to do just as we like, but after you have experienced the comfort of living in a German town where the streets are always clean and where the poor are not ragged and dirty as they are here, you see the point of the rules and regulations and do